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## House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
June 22, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles, in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1379. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and the National Security Act of 1947 to require disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act regarding certain persons, disclose Nazi war criminal records without impairing any investigation or prosecution conducted by the Department of Justice or certain intelligence matters, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 104. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the integration of the Armed Forces.

### MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. WISE) for 5 minutes.

### HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION ON RAILROADS

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, this weekend was quite an eventful one in West Virginia in the Cabell County area where we had another hazardous materials derailment. This is the second one in a little over a year in that area.

Happily there were no fatalities. A limited number of people were hospitalized briefly. A hundred families will have to be evacuated and most of them will be back today.

Beginning yesterday, I was in personal contact with the National Transportation Safety Board team in the area, as well as the FRA. I have just spoken personally this morning with the National Transportation Safety Board team. At this point, the cause of this accident is still unknown. Of the roughly 150 railcars, 34 of them derailed, a couple of chemical tanker cars punctured, and formaldehyde and chlorine were released.

Their focus is presently looking at one hopper car to see whether it could have had some problems, and the track is yet to be inspected in that area. The mechanical problems, to the extent there might have been some, are still to be examined.

The good news is that the emergency response teams that arrived did exactly the right things. They made the decisions that needed to be made and evacuated the families that needed to be evacuated. Of course, we will continue to dig out from this for a period of time. The immediate concern is what happens to the groundwater. Most of the homes in that area are on wells and that will have to be evaluated closely.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that this Congress deal with the problem of hazardous materials transportation on

railroads. Indeed, legislation that I have introduced and that we have been trying to move I believe will do that, particularly in setting up regional response teams.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that this is the second hazardous materials accident in almost a year, I have today requested the Federal Railroad Administrator to perform a comprehensive review of hazardous materials transportation in this particular area of West Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, we are a hazardous materials transportation corridor. We have a large concentration of our own chemical industry and also we are transporting large amounts of hazardous materials from other States and other regions through this area. So, it is important that we undertake every possible action to make sure that these railway lines are as safe as possible.

There was one fatality last year in Scary, which was not anywhere near the same cause that caused this one. But the fact of the matter is that when transporting hazardous materials, we have to make sure that these rail lines are absolutely as safe as possible and that the emergency responders are as well trained as possible.

In my request today to the Federal Railroad Administrator, I have asked several things. I have asked that there be a comprehensive review, working with CSX and the others involved. A comprehensive review of the safety of hazardous materials transportation in this area of West Virginia.

Second, I have asked some specific questions. Is there adequate inspection of the cars, the tank cars, at the plant when they are being loaded and before they roll out, versus being transported into the yards and being inspected there?

Is there adequate inspection of the track? Because if hazardous materials are rolling over these tracks on a regular basis, we have to make sure that the safest standards are maintained.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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